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Navajo President Shelly Says be Prepared for Severe Weather

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said people throughout the Navajo Nation need to be prepared to unexpected weather during the monsoon season.

“We have to be prepared for all weather that may come our way. This is the year we usually experience rains. But since we’ve been in a drought, the ground is harder making it less likely to soak up any water. That creates the opportunities for flash flooding. Though we are thankful for all the rain we receive, we must respect the power of water,” President Shelly said.

During this past weekend, the Department of Emergency coordinated efforts to respond to nearly a dozen areas of flooding in different parts of the Navajo Nation.

“Chapters are being asked to assist families. We ask that citizens to be aware of their weather and surroundings. Please be cautious of standing water that may look like it’s not deep; utility crews may not have been able to get to energized power lines that are fallen,” President Shelly said.

Navajo DEM Director Rose Whitehair said that chapters need to be involved in responding to weather emergencies.

“It is extremely critical that chapters list their emergency call and cell phone numbers posted on their closed doors for weekend emergencies. Tribal citizens, Department of Public Safety and CHR’s were desperately trying to contact chapter officials to set up shelters this past weekend but were not able to, due to the fact that no one could be found,” Whitehair said.

“We need to work together. We work for the people of the Navajo Nation and we have to be accountable and responsive in times of need,” President Shelly said.

Here is a list of tips to help preparedness for severe weather:

- Be alert to weather conditions. Stay tuned to your local radio station for weather information.
- During high winds stay away from windows. Take shelter in a solid structure.
- Communities need to identify shelters during high winds and harsh weather for residents of the area.
- If there is flooding in your community, stay out of the area. Do not cross flooded roads, arroyos or bridges. Watch your children and make sure they do not play in standing water or flowing flood waters. Small and large debris is carried by flowing flood waters. Flood waters are contaminated.
- Navajo Tribal Utility Authority cautions against spectators at repair operations due to safety concerns for the public.
- Report all weather damages to the chapter administration first. They will contact the Emergency Operations Center for follow-up, if needed.

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